

PEOPLE OF THE WEEK®

CAN GEORGE BUSH SAVE THE CIA?

THE SWEARING-IN of George Bush as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency on January 30 marked an end to a CIA era—but promised little letup in the Agency's troubles.

What came to an end was a decade of control of the CIA by "professionals."

Mr. Bush, 51, the ninth Director in the CIA's 28-year history, is a political figure, a former member of Congress from Texas and a one-time Republican National Chairman. He was considered as a vice-presidential choice by both Presidents Nixon and Ford.

That background drew some opposition to his confirmation, largely from Senate liberals. The January 27 vote to put him into the office was 64 to 27.

Now Mr. Bush is expected to play the key role in a reorganization of the CIA. Both Congress and the White House are working up plans to redefine its role in undercover work and bring its covert activities under closer scrutiny.

Leaks to press. Many officials, however, are concerned that widespread oversight of CIA operations by Congress would result in paralyzing the CIA's intelligence gathering.

The reason: Some of the CIA secrets that were revealed in closed sessions of congressional committees have been leaked to news media.

The latest example was a draft report prepared after a year-long study by a House investigating committee headed by Representative Otis Pike (Dem.), of New York. Release of the report was blocked by a House vote of 246-124 on January 29, but many of its details already had made their way into print.

One reported conclusion: Federal intelligence agencies operate in such fashion that they are "beyond the scrutiny" of Congress. Other allegations:

- Budget figures supplied Congress by intelligence agencies were far below the sums actually spent.
- The CIA violated a 1967 presidential directive banning it from giving financial assistance to schools.

Retiring CIA Director William E. Colby called a news conference to protest bitterly against the "obvious bursting of the dam protecting many of our secret operations and activities."

He explained: "We provided large amounts of information to this committee with the understanding that the secrets would be protected. . . . The committee seems neither able to keep secrets nor its agreement."

Mr. Colby called the report an "outrageous calumny," and asserted: "I believe it totally biased and a disservice to

our nation, giving a thoroughly wrong impression of American intelligence. By selective use of the evidence provided, by innuendo and suggestive language, the committee implies that intelligence has deceptive budgets, has no accountability and has not complied with a direct order of the President.

"I deny these flatly."

Coming into speculation now is what effect Mr. Bush, as a seasoned politician, will have on the CIA's future.

Can he reorganize it without impairing its role as an intelligence-gathering organization? Will he try to "politicize" it to make it conform to the political needs of the White House?

The answer to the first question is still to be decided. To the second, most intelligence experts say "No," claiming that the professional staffs at CIA and other intelligence agencies fall into a pattern that cannot be bent to political ends—even if Mr. Bush wanted to turn in that direction.

Mr. Colby, who has taken the brunt of past misdeeds of the CIA, has set down what he thinks Congress should do in reforming the Agency.

In testimony on January 23, he said:

"Traditionally, intelligence is assumed to operate in total secrecy and outside the law. This is impossible under our Constitution and in our society. As a result, when CIA was established in 1947, a compromise was made under which broad, general statutes were drawn and carefully limited arrangements for congressional review were adopted. It was then believed necessary to sacrifice oversight for secrecy.

"Our society has changed, however, and a greater degree of oversight is now considered necessary. U.S. intelligence has already moved out of the atmosphere of total secrecy which previously characterized it. We who are in intelligence are well aware of the need to retain public confidence and congressional support if we are to continue to make our contribution to the safety of our country.

"Thus, from the earliest days of the current investigations, I have stressed my hope that they will develop better guidelines for our operations and stronger oversight, to insure that our

activities do remain within the Constitution and the laws of our country. . . .

"In 1947, we took a small step away from total secrecy by enacting general statutes and constructing careful oversight arrangements in the Congress. Proposals now under consideration would alter these arrangements to assure more detailed oversight.

"But it is essential that the pendulum not swing so far as to destroy the necessary secrecy of intelligence or destroy intelligence itself in the process."

Erosion of secrecy. The CIA was once so zealous of its secret mission that on roads bordering its Langley, Va., headquarters there were no signs pointing the way to "The CIA." Such signs have now been installed—and many



George Bush, right, with Mrs. Bush looking on, is sworn in as new Director of the CIA by Justice Potter Stewart.

more secrets of the CIA have been revealed, through leaks from Congressmen and their staffs, other Government agencies, books written by former agents and even the CIA itself.

Mr. Colby has acknowledged that he was the anonymous source of the first news story that exposed the fact that journalists were employed as intelligence gatherers for the CIA.

Ticklish dilemma. Mr. Bush, taking over as Director of the Agency, will come face to face with this problem, which is bound to be embarrassing to a former member of Congress:

Capitol Hill is certain to insist on knowing more and more about the covert operations of the Central Intelligence Agency. But—

How can this insistence be reconciled with the reality that Congressmen and persons in other Government agencies have been careless in revealing these secrets to the mass media?